CONCERNS BOTH BRITISH INDIA
AND INDIAN STATES.

Secrt. 11.27—48,00 —1[illegible]-11-3[illegible]

Political (~~193~~ 1887) Department.

Mis SERIES.

G.O. No. 597

DATED 27-7-87.

Confidential

[Despatch Abstract.]

Military — Nayar Brigade — Col. Ketch[illegible] apology.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Trivandrum
19th July 1887

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS
CHIEF SECRETARY
23 JUL 87

My dear Stokes

Since my arrival at Trivandrum on the 8th I have been as busy as a Cook's Tourist; have exchanged visits with the Maharaja, the Elya Raja, the first Prince, the Senior Ranee, the Junior Ranee, and the Dewan.

Yesterday I presented my letter of introduction from His Excellency the Governor to His Highness the Maharaja in

open Durbar with the usual salutes. The Body Guard, the Nayar Brigade and Residents Escort were very creditably turned out. After the letter had been read His Highness made a short speech in which he expressed his gratification at the appointment of so distinguished an officer as representative of the British Government and hoped that relations between India and Travancore would remain cordial as hitherto.

His Highness spoke in English

in a low tone of voice and I replied suitably.

This morning I have received all the principal Native Officials, of whom all but one speak English fluently.

I devoted two days to going round his works with the Chief Engineer and was specially struck by the excellence and cheapness of his bricks and tiles.

I have inspected the Gaol recently built on the system of the Indian Government Gaols. The Institution is in most respects admirable,

Some Sanitary measures have been recommended by me, and will be carried out.

I have been round the Public offices with the Dewan and visited the Mint & Royal Stables.

I have inspected the Lines and Hospital of the Body Guard and Nayar Brigade and the books of the Corps by the invitation of Colonel Kitchen – He deserves great credit for the condition of his troops for the state of the Lines and books and for the care that he has bestowed on his men

and horses their clothing and
surroundings.
Colonel Kitchen is to write to the
Dewan for permission to revise
the standing orders, a permission
that the Dewan is most anxious
to give, and I have promised to
assist by looking thro' his manu-
-script, a dozen pages at a time
as he finishes them.
The Dewan tells me that the Admin-
istration Report is in the hands of
His Highness and may be expected
very soon.

Lieutenant Atkinson arrived on the 14th July to join the Nayar Brigade. I am on pleasant terms with the Officer Commanding the Nayar Brigade and have not heard any thing of Messrs Wyllie and Kress since they left Palamcottah.

Yours sincerely

J W Prendergast

Circulated.

H.C.S.

with offl. reqt. of C[illegible]
apology.

Seen
[illegible] 23/7

No. A.

Trevandrum
1st July 1887.

From

Lt. Col. W. D. B. Ketchen,
Madras Light Cavalry,
Commanding the Nair Brigade,

To

The Dewan of
Travancore,

Sir,

I have the honor in accordance with orders received from His Excellency the Governor in Council Madras to withdraw paras 5 and 6 of my letter dated 14th April 1887 and to express my regret for having written as I did in the heat of the moment.

I was quite willing to do this before as noted by His Excellency in Council — "as it appears that he is conscious he has gone "too far and is ready to apologise for the "objectionable letter which escaped him "in the heat of the moment."

His Excellency in Council has been pleased to add regarding me "He "has in the past done good service to the "State and shown himself suited for the "post he holds and the Governor in Council "is willing to condone what has now hap-"pened if he will withdraw the expressions "and letters to which exception has been

"taken

"taken and apologize to the Maha Rajah
"and his Government for his conduct in
"this case."

I therefore unhesitatingly
withdraw the expressions and letters to
which exception has been taken and apologise
to the Maha Rajah and his Government
as required by His Excellency in Council.

My relations with the Maha-
Rajah and His Highness' predecessors
have always been most pleasant and with the
exception of this single occasion with his Govern-
ment also.

May I therefore request that
when conveying my apology to the Maha Rajah
you will also express to His Highness that I
sincerely hope the same friendly relations
which for so many years existed between
His Highness' Government and myself
may be resumed and continue so long
as I may remain in Command of the
Brigade.

I have &c.

(Signed) W. D. B. Kitchen, Lt Col.
Madras Light Cavalry
Commanding the Nair Brigade.

(True copy)
(Signed) J. C. Hannyngton,
Resident.

[illegible]

Huzur Cutchery,
No. A. Trevandrum, 4th July 1887.
To

Lt. Col. W. D. B. Ketchen,
Commanding the Nair Brigade

Sir,

In acknowledging your letter No. A dated the 1st Instant, I have the honor to inform you that His Highness the Maha Rajah has been pleased to accept the apology tendered to himself and his Government and to command that the expressions and letters to which exception has been taken be considered as withdrawn.

2. His Highness is happily able to endorse, in every particular, the sentiments expressed by His Excellency the Governor in Council, in regard to the good service you have rendered and your undoubted capacity to fill the important office you hold in Travancore. And now that the unfortunate incident which led to the unpleasantness has been completely healed, I am to assure you that the friendly relations which you have always maintained with His Highness the Maha Rajah and (barring the solitary instance noted above) with His Highness' Government, will be resumed with as much cordiality as if that incident had never occurred.

I

I have &c.

(Signed) T. Rama Row
Dewan.

(True copy)

(Signed) J. C. Harrington
Resident

(True copies)

W. Sandiyart General
Ag Resident

[illegible]

GOVERNMENT
OF
INDIA

No 129.

Resident's Office,

Trevandrum, 18" July 1887.

From

General Sir H. N. D. Prendergast, K.C.B; V.C; R.E.

Ag Resident in Travancore and Cochin,

To

The Hon'ble H. E. Stokes

Ag Chief Secretary to Government,

Fort St. George.

Sir,

With reference to the Proceeding of the Madras Government No. 482 dated 24th June 1887, I have the honor to submit for the information of Government copies of Lieutenant Colonel Ketchen's apology to the Government of His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore and its acceptance of the same.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

your most obedt. Servt.

H Prendergast General

Ag Resident.

JS

C No. 873

188 .

Political Department.

From

The Resident in Travancore & Cochin,

To

The Chief Secretary to Government,
Fort St. George.

Dated 18th July 1887

Received

No. 129,

Enclosure. 1

No. 597
Order 27 July/87

Recorded.

CHIEF SECRETARY
22 JUL 87
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Col. Ketchen's Apology to the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Travancore and its acceptance of the same.

Forwards copies of — for the information of Govt.

With order

158

[?]

ORDINARY, MS.

Political DEPARTMENT.

G. O. DATED *27th July 1887.*

No. *597.*

65

CONFIDENTIAL. *158/1887*

~~When given for copying~~

[Despatch Abstract.]

Travancore - Nayar Brigade.

Colonel Kitchen's apology.

Back Paper, No. of 188 .

Further Paper, No. of 188 .

Read again Order of Government, dated 188 , No. Miscellaneous.

Enclosures.

Current No.

Statement with ditto.

Order of Government. .. .. .. A A

Statement with ditto.

Papers not filed up, being meant for despatch in original (not paged).

N.B.—

A = Copy in full.
B = Not to be copied.
P = Copy abstract only.
Q = Copy heading only.

Put in G.O. bundle
(8. 452-3 Poll. 8.14-9-1889)

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

PRÉCIS.

THE Cannanore family is supposed to be a branch of the ancient house of Kolattiri, or Cherikal; and to have embraced the Muhammadan religion at a very early period. First a tributary of the Cherikal Rajah, the representative of this house soon rose to a position of independence about the middle of the 18th century; but the wars, which subsequently disturbed the peace of that part of the country brought the house into varying relations with the British Government; they having been at first open enemies, then conquered foes and lastly confirmed allies. In 1792, all the territories of the reigning Bibi became the right of the Company by conquest; and were included among the cessions made by Tippu: but consideration of the smallness of the Bibi's possessions, and her situation as the Head of the Mappilla tribe, made it appear politic to permit her to retain her possessions. Her situation as a conquered foe, without any rights, being pointed out to her, she was called upon to offer fair terms. She tendered a moiety of the yield of her territorial possessions, which moiety on her five islands was given at Rupees 1,200, and on the Continent at Rupees 3,140; together with 10,000 Rupees, as a similar share of the produce and commercial advantages accruing from the Laccadives. She also executed a Muchchilika or Agreement, dated 11th April 1793, engaging to submit to the sequestration of the Laccadives for the advantage of the Honorable Company's Government, if it should be ordered by the Governor-General in Council. The lengthened negotiations that then ensued—the deputation of Ensign Bentley to the islands to ascertain the correctness of the Bibi's statement concerning her revenues,—his report of the oppression of the islanders by the Bibi and her gross mis-statements regarding the resources of the islands,—the resolution of the Government of India to abolish the coir monopoly and to introduce a better form of government in the islands,—and the obstinate refusal of the Bibi to accept the former proposal,—these and other details need not be fully set out here. It is sufficient to state that the Commissioners at last entered into an engagement with the Bibi provisionally, subject to ratification by Government; by which it was agreed that she should pay to Government Rupees 15,000 per annum, being the Jumma on the houses, purams, &c., situated at and near Cannanore, on her trade to the Laccadives, and on her Janmam property on the said islands; that the same should be paid in three equal instalments; and that the Agreement was not to do away in any shape with the rights which the Government had to the Laccadives as set forth in the Muchchilika of 1793.

This Agreement is dated 28th October 1796; and is the document on which so much stress has been laid by the representatives of the Cannanore family.

2. The Government of Bombay, to whom these proceedings were reported, set on foot further negotiations; and endeavoured long and fruitlessly to obtain the consent of the Bibi to resign her sovereignty of the islands, or to throw open the trade, and reform the administration of justice in the islands. The breaking out of the war with France and other considerations, which sprang up meanwhile, led however to the matter being dropped; and for the next half century the islands remained unnoticed by the Company's officers.

3. The great storm of 1847, which devastated two of the principal islands, Androth and Kalpeni, again directed attention to the Laccadives. Mr. Robinson, the Head Assistant Collector of Malabar, was deputed to investigate the amount of injury sustained; and to inquire into the circumstances of an address, which had been presented by some of the inhabitants of one of the islands, complaining of the oppression of the Bibi's administration.

Mr. William Robinson's Report of 1848.

He reported that on the whole, the rights and customs of the people, such as they were, seemed to be much better defined than might have been expected under such an unsettled Government; and, through the influence of the chief men, were pretty well maintained against the authority of the Bibi, whose distant position rendered her dependent upon their co-operation to maintain her influence. The people seemed far from submissive to personal violence. The administration, though it had been severe in the earlier days of the power of the Cannanore family, now erred on the side of timidity and weakness. But the rule of one, who was at the same time sovereign, merchant and monopolist, ready to turn every circumstance to account to add to her personal gains, could not but be arbitrary and illiberal; and the people's disaffection grew greater by contrasting their position with that of the people of the group of islands * belonging to the Sarkar; in which all the waste, the fishery and everything else was given up to them, save the coir monopoly which was conducted upon liberal terms. The Bibi's administration repressed the resources of the islands, and was fraught with oppression to the inhabitants: and Mr. Robinson urged their transfer to the direct management of the Company. The Collector considered this measure inevitable, though the pride of the Bibi, who plumed herself greatly on her position as the sovereign of these petty isles, would not allow her to entertain the idea for a moment. He observed that if resolved upon, it could be easily carried out by remitting the 10,000 Rupees of Peshkash fixed upon the trade of the islands, and allowing the Bibi an annual compensation of an equal amount for her share of the profits; her claims as a private landowner remaining unaffected by the change of the system, and the Government in exchange for the above 20,000 Rupees deriving such revenue as the Islands under a fair system could produce.

Views of the Revenue Board.

4. The Board of Revenue were opposed to the resumption of the islands against the wishes of the Bibi; for the reason, that it could be insisted upon only on two grounds, *viz.*, first on the circumstance that the sovereignty of the Laccadives had never been guaranteed to her by any express treaty; and secondly, on the agreement executed by the Bibi in 1793, binding herself to submit to the sequestration of the islands if it should be so ordered by the Governor-General in Council. They contended that the latter was only a temporary provision for the sole purpose of ascertaining the real value of the islands, as the negotiations subsequently carried on to induce the Bibi to give up the sovereignty of the islands seemed incompatible with the supposition of any previous surrender by the terms of the engagement; and that the absence of any agreement guaranteeing the sovereignty of the islands to the Cannanore House could, of itself, be no justification of their resumption, after the family had been tacitly permitted to be in possession for so long a period. They recommended, that as the revenues of the Bibi were so much crippled by the storm as to compel her to seek a remission in the Peshkash, the requisite remission should be granted for a period of ten years on the condition of her consenting to the introduction of the necessary reforms in her administration.

These were enumerated as follows:—

(1) The thorough reform of the coir monopoly, the adoption of fair rates of payment to the producers, and the abolition of the many unjust and vexatious practices attendant on the system.

(2) The immediate abandonment of the monopolies of cocoanuts, salt and tobacco; and the placing of those of cowries, tortoise-shell, holotheria and ambergris, if allowed to continue, on an improved footing.

* These too at one time belonged to the Cannanore family. In 1785 the islanders revolted and sought the protection of Tippu, who placed them under his Cutcherry at Mangalore. In 1799, they came into the hands of the Company, together with the province of Canara. The Cannanore family, however, as late as 1821 procured from the Court of Directors an allowance of 5,250 Rupees a-year as compensation.

(3) The final settlement of the dispute regarding waste lands; the examination of the accounts of book debts kept both upon the islands and at Cannanore, such items as were unreasonable or irrecoverable being struck out, and arrangements made for the gradual liquidation of such as might be properly payable.
(4) The complete reform of the system of dispensing civil and criminal justice throughout the islands; and the maintenance of a sufficient Revenue, Police and Judicial Establishment on adequate pay.
(5) The discontinuance of the payment of nazranas.

Orders of the Government of India and Court of Directors.

The Supreme Government and the Court of Directors approved of these proposals: and the latter remarked at the time, that they concurred in the opinion that the Government had no right to demand the compulsory cession of the islands for a pecuniary equivalent.

The Bibi's Reply.

5. On the conditions being offered to the Bibi, she replied, that the rules established by her ancestors years ago were still in force; she had not introduced any new system; she had raised the price of coir from Rupees 9 to 11½; the monopoly of coçoanuts was abolished and the hire for the fishing of cowries and tortoise-shell raised; the pay of her servants was also raised and the islanders relieved from the charge of maintaining them; she was unable to carry out any further reforms: in short the islands being her sole source of income, she could not afford to be so munificent and charitable as the Company were to their islanders.

Attachment of Cannanore Estate.

6. The Government, upon this, recalled the remission offered; and ordered the collection of the arrears of Peshkash. The Bibi's lands at Cannanore were attached: and the Board of Revenue submitted for the consideration of Government their doubts, whether the larger portion of the arrear due on account of the islands, could properly be treated as an arrear of Land Revenue, realizable by the process laid down in the Regulations. The relations, they observed, of the Bibi with the islands, though never properly defined, appeared to be essentially political, and the sum paid on account of them to be a tribute. They were therefore unwilling to take any step which would lend sanction to the view that the islands were the private property of the Bibi, or that they could be treated as such for the satisfaction either of her public or private debts. They thought that the omission of the Bibi to pay her tribute according to the terms of what she called her Treaty of 1796, coupled with the abuses of her administration and the claims of the inhabitants upon the Government as the paramount power, would justify the resumption of the islands; though the ambiguous terms of her engagement were not formerly thought in themselves sufficient to warrant the measure.

The Court of Directors order Sequestration.

The Government did not approve of this view; but the Court of Directors in directing the immediate recovery of the arrears by sequestration observed: "In this enforcement you will keep distinct the two questions of arrears of tribute for the islands, and arrears of Land Revenue for Cannanore. In the latter case you will proceed according to the Regulation, and in the former you will take on yourselves the administration of the islands in order to secure our revenue, and recover our arrears from the surplus proceeds, if any. At the same time you will intimate to the Bibi that if she will accede to an arrangement by which the direct administration of the islands shall be permanently transferred to your Government, you will excuse her from the payment of arrears due to your Government whether on account of the islands or on account of her estate on the Continent of India."

7. About this time, the islanders, in open defiance of the authority of the Bibi, conveyed their goods for sale to other ports than Cannanore. She solicited the Government to instruct the Collector not to allow the landing of any coir, cowries, tortoise-shell and cocoanuts, brought from her islands, at any of the British ports; arguing that her monopoly was entitled to protection by Government as it had been expressly stipulated for in 1796, and formed the basis upon which her large Peshkash was fixed. But the Government held that the monopoly was not sanctioned by the so-called Treaty of 1796, and would not allow any restriction to be placed on the importation of the produce from the islands at the ports of Canara and Malabar. They observed at the same time that if the prohibition was of long standing, and its withdrawal, and the change thereby effected in the trade, would entitle the Bibi to any compensation, they would be prepared to consider it. The order for the sequestration of the islands on account of the arrears due on them, which soon after issued, diverted attention from this subject.

Mins. Cons., 7th September 1854.

SEQUESTRATION OF ISLANDS.

8. In November 1854, the Laccadives were brought under Government mangement; but the island of Minicoy alone, which the Bibi claimed as her Janm property, offered an open resistance to the authority of Government, and was only finally brought under Government management in 1858.

MANAGEMENT OF ISLANDS DURING PERIOD OF SEQUESTRATION.

9. During the six years of Government rule in the islands, the old monopoly of coir and the royalty on cowries and tortoise were retained; that on cocoanuts and holotheria being an innovation, had been given up by the Bibi herself, who had also disowned the nazranas as a source of income. Jaggery and shark fins, &c., were already free; and the ten per cent. customs levied on all imports and most of the exports were given up by Government. The price paid to the islanders for coir was also raised to Rupees 17-8-0 per candy: the rate obtaining in the Canara isles. The maintenance of the monopoly during Government management was considered necessary as it was in contemplation eventually to restore the islands to the Bibi, and as free trade could not be allowed under the terms of her tenure, without sacrificing the main portion of her revenue.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE REFUSES TO SANCTION RETENTION OF ISLANDS.

10. In his despatch of the 16th January 1861, the Secretary of State observed: "It is consistent neither with our sense of justice, nor with our dignity, to avail ourselves of a rigid application of the Revenue Law for the attainment of * that object. * * * I must accordingly direct that you will reconsider this case on the Bibi liquidating the amount which may be shown to be due on account of the Peshkash, and charges of management, and excluding interest, direct the islands to be restored to her revenue management. If she should still refuse to introduce into her administration such reforms as you may consider necessary, she must be distinctly informed that in the event of any acts of oppression or extortion being hereafter proved against her or her agents, Government will not hesitate to place the islands under sequestration in order to compel the introduction of good government."

* NOTE.—Viz., the retention of the islands in view to their being better governed.

RESTORATION OF ISLANDS TO THE BIBI.

11. The restoration of the islands to the Bibi in 1861 was immediately followed by her death. Disputes arose regarding her succession: and Sultan Ali Rajah was finally recognised as the head of the family. At this time, the old difficulty regarding the monopoly revived; the islanders having commenced to

import coir and other articles into the Government ports on the coast. Sultan Ali Rajah solicited the interference of Government in prohibiting the practice; pointing out that their previous refusal in 1852, to continue the prohibition, became virtually a dead letter by their afterwards finding it desirable to continue the monopoly during the period of their administration of the islands. To this it was replied that the Government arrangements were carried out in concert with the islanders, not in direct opposition to them; and that the absence of any legal power on the part of Government to enforce such a prohibition was an insuperable bar to the grant of Ali Rajah's request.

12. While complaints regarding the breach of monopoly were frequent on the part of the Rajah, countercharges were brought by the islanders of acts of oppression on the part of the agents appointed by the Rajah for the collection of the dues.

13. On the opinion of the Collector of Malabar being asked concerning a proposal from the Rajah to introduce a system of port-clearances in the islands, and a request that orders might be issued to all Superintendents of Sea Customs in Malabar and Canara, directing them to regard all unprinted and unstamped port-clearances coming from the islands as spurious and to refuse entry to boats unprovided with genuine port-clearances, that officer stated that as the monopoly of coir had been maintained by the British Government in the Canara Islands, there was no objection to the right being retained and enforced by the Rajah in those islands, which had for so long a period formed part of the possessions of the Cannanore family; but he considered that the assistance of the Government Customs Officers in support of the Rajah's monopoly should be made dependent on the Government being satisfied that the Divi Islanders enjoyed at the hands of the Rajah a good and liberal administration, that only the customary taxes were levied, and that as regards the monopoly of coir and the royalty in cowries and tortoise-shell the dues levied should be in accordance with usage. The Government while approving of this recommendation, resolved that before making the concession, Mr. Logan should visit the islands and inquire into their condition, and ascertain on the spot the nature of the administration which had prevailed for the last few years, and in what respects it required amendment. Ali Rajah, at the instance of Government, accompanied Mr. Logan on his visit.

G.O., 3rd June 1869, No. 193.

Mr. Logan's Report of 1869.

14. It appeared from the report submitted by Mr. Logan after his return from the islands, that the authority of the Rajah was in complete abeyance in the islands of Androth, Kavaratti, and Agatti; that in Kalpeni, although the authority of the Rajah was still recognised, the inhabitants had many and just causes of complaint, both from the oppressive mode in which the Rajah's agents enforced the coir monopoly and from the grasping policy pursued by them of converting private into Pandaram land, *i.e.*, land in which the Rajah held the proprietary right In the island of Minicoy, where there was no monopoly, and the circumstances of which are different from those of the four Northern islands, the people were prosperous and contented and paid willing obedience to the Rajah's authority.

Views of Mr. Atholl MacGregor.

The evils of the monopoly system and the sufferings of the islanders under it were thus described by Mr. MacGregor :—"The tyranny which the monopoly gives an opportunity of enforcing, the petty exactions which they suffer at the hands of the Rajah's dependents, the delay to which they are exposed, the subterfuges resorted to to evade fair and full payment appear to make the pressure of the monopoly as worked by the Rajah intolerable. Even when the amount to be paid has been determined, the Rajah can always fall back on the alleged existence of an old balance to be scored out; and as no accounts of these balances are given to the parties, or are even now forthcoming when demanded, it is impossible to disprove the claim."

It was under these circumstances, that the islanders had been driven to resistance; and at present, the monopoly could scarcely be said to exist.

Suggestions of the Madras Government.

15. In their Order, dated 20th December 1871, the Government observed that matters had gone too far to afford any hope that the Rajah unassisted would be able to enforce the monopoly, even if he had been prepared to make concessions so as to put it on the same footing as that prevailing in the Canara Islands under Government management. The islanders having for the last few years successfully evaded the monopoly, an attempt on the part of the Rajah, unassisted by Government, to re-impose the monopoly would not improbably be attended by bloodshed, and would be unsuccessful; and on the other hand the evils, which attended the Rajah's management of this monopoly, had become so serious that the Government could not consent to lend him any aid in its restoration.

The Collector was to explain this clearly to the Rajah; and exhort him to regain the obedience of the islanders by the announcement, that he had of his own free will abolished the coir monopoly; and that he was willing to receive the Revenue, undoubtedly due to him by the islanders, in some less objectionable form.

To compensate the Rajah for the loss of Revenue, which the abolition of the monopoly would entail, the Government proposed that he should have a share in the coir produced in the islands, the exact proportion to be taken by him being settled by the Collector after debate with the Rajah and the headmen of the islands. In fixing the Rajah's share the Collector would endeavour to place the islanders in a position not inferior to the Northern Laccadive Islands and any losses to which this arrangement would subject the Rajah might be met by a corresponding reduction in the Peshkash. The Rajah's share once paid the islanders would be free to carry their coir to any port most advantageous to themselves.

It was essential to this arrangement that the Rajah should abstain from pressing any claims that might have arisen from the breaches of the fiscal rules that had recently prevailed; and that no claim should be attempted to be enforced by the Rajah on that account.

In consideration of the Rajah foregoing these claims the Government would be prepared to make a fair remission of the arrears of Peshkash which might have accrued.

It should be explained to the Rajah that if he consented to this equitable arrangement and on no other condition, the Government would exercise their authority to enforce his claims.

Should he refuse, the Government could not assist him in maintaining the monopoly. They could not allow the islands to become the scene of violence and bloodshed. The Rajah's resources must in this case cease altogether; and on his failing to pay regularly his Peshkash the islands would pass away from his authority altogether.

If the Rajah consented to these proposals, there would, it was apprehended, be little difficulty in restoring his authority on the islands, and the Government in that case would not consider it necessary to make any radical change in their administration, which with certain amendments was not ill-suited to the condition and character of the people.

In the same order, it was decided :—

(*a*) That assumption of titles and dignity becoming the position of sovereign princes was not permissible in the case of the Cannanore family.

(*b*) That the islands should be annually visited by an officer of Government.

(*c*) That Sultan Musa Ali Rajah was to be recognised as successor of Sultan Ali Rajah.

(*d*) That the restoration of salute and honors formerly withdrawn from Sultan Ali Rajah, owing to his supposed complicity in a murderous outrage, would depend on Musa Ali Rajah's accepting the advice tendered to him by Government and on his placing the administration of the islands on a satisfactory footing.

THE RAJAH'S REPLY.

16. On receiving these orders the Rajah again addressed Government. He protested against the withdrawal of certain family distinctions conceded in former years, and against the conditional restoration of others. While giving his unqualified assent to all measures of reform proposed by Government, he objected to the fixing of a certain portion of the coir produce as his share, on the ground that he would have great difficulty in selling it to advantage, to meet the Government dues as well as the State and family exigencies, when the Indian market was overstocked with coir by the islanders. The latter, he said, could well afford to dispose of their coir at a low rate, as the manufacturers were paid only at Rupees 10 per candy.

17. As regards the remission of the arrears of Peshkash he observed: "The remission of the whole amount of Peshkash in arrears, including the sums I have already paid, will not cover one-eighth of the loss we have suffered for the last eight years, during the whole of which period, we have by borrowing and other means equally ruinous and distressing, paid into the public treasury in all 70,000 Rupees without realizing so much as would suffice to meet the expense of our administration of the islands, leaving a balance of 14,000 and odd Rupees unpaid, and I therefore hope that Government will kindly condescend to admit the reasonableness of my recovering a portion of such loss, not from my subjects in general, but from the smugglers who have grown rich by their daring and unrestrained invasion of our exclusive trade, *the profit whereof is shared between my house and the Sarkar*."

MR. ATHOLL MACGREGOR DECLINES TO SUPPORT THE RAJAH.

18. Mr. MacGregor, to whom this letter and its enclosures were referred, reported that he found nothing in them in any way which would support the remonstrance of the Rajah against the recent orders of Government. The Rajah agreed to everything except the abolition of the monopoly. As regards his agreement to improve his administration, it cost but a few words. The abolition of the monopoly was the *sine qua non* to the introduction of an improved state of affairs, and in the absence of this, he had little doubt that the state of anarchy described by Mr. Logan was steadily on the increase. In the same letter, Mr. MacGregor also brought to the notice of Government, that he was credibly informed that the Rajah was laying out the money, that should have gone towards discharging his arrears, in private purchases of land.

MR. SPEDDING'S REPORT OF 1873.

19. In March 1873, Mr. Spedding, Acting Sub-Collector of Malabar, visited the islands. It appeared from the report of this officer that the great majority of the petitions presented to him related to disputes between private individuals, that there were no new complaints of arbitrary conduct on the part of the Rajah's agents, that the latter had in every island lost almost all power for either good or evil, and that the main grievance of the islanders was the utter absence of any administration of justice.

20. The Rajah's agents did not, however, seem disposed to throw any difficulty in Mr. Spedding's way, but were willing to give any information they could. The following particulars of the several islands were furnished in the report:—

KALPENI.—No petitions had been presented, and the people generally appeared satisfied with the way in which the Mukhyasthans with the assistance of the Qazi settled such petty disputes as might arise. The people seemed to be anxious that their island should be assumed by Government and managed on the same system as the Canara islands. A very serious calamity in the shape of a disease fatal to the cocoanut tree was threatening Kalpeni.

ANDROTH.—Not many petitions had been received; these were chiefly to the effect that there was no justice done in the case of disputes. The Mukhyasthans

were clearly losing the influence they formerly had possessed and exercised to the benefit of the community. The people had no objection to a monopoly as such, but only to the grasping and annoying manner in which it was worked.

KAVARATTI.—This island had been described in 1870 as being nearly in a state of anarchy. Its condition was now much worse in this respect. A great number of petitions had been presented. There was an entire absence of any attempt at a settlement of dispute, which had resulted in a state of affairs in which the stronger did what he pleased on the most frivolous pretext.

AGATTI.—Matters here were quite as bad as in Kavaratti. It spoke volumes for the innate mildness of the people's temperament that as yet personal violence was rare in Agatti and Kavaratti. But no time was to be lost in taking measures for the restoration of order in these two islands.

21. Mr. Spedding recommended —

(1) The appointment of two officers to be placed in Agatti and Kavaratti with powers of a Third-class Magistrate and District Munsif.
(2) The passing of an Act giving the Collector the same powers in the islands, as Agent to the Governor, as were possessed by the Collectors of Ganjam and Vizagapatam in the non-regulation parts of those districts.
(3) The maintenance of the monopoly system after Government assumed the management of islands, this being best suited to the circumstances of the people.

22. On receipt of these reports, Minutes were recorded by Lord Hobart and his colleagues.

THE HON'BLE MR. ROBINSON'S MINUTE, DATED JULY 7TH, 1874.

23. Mr. Robinson said that the only possible issue of the utterly unsatisfactory conditions which had subsisted for the administration of the Laccadives since the commencement of the English rule had gradually but surely come about. Under gross mismanagement of the resources of the islands, unwise and oppressive treatment of their inhabitants and general misfeasance, a peaceful resistance to the authority of the Cannanore family had supervened; things had gone from bad to worse, until—in all the islands except Minicoy—the administration of the Rajah had absolutely collapsed under every head. The public revenues of the islands were hopelessly in arrears, and the agency for their collection was powerless. While "hopeless anarchy" fitly described the condition into which the people had drifted for want of authority. Even the conservative social influence of the higher orders was fast passing away amongst the people, and each man did as seemed good in his own eyes. The whole population—between 7,000 and 8,000 souls—were naturally and earnestly looking to the Government for the restoration of order and administration of justice, and were anxious to place themselves loyally at the disposal of the State on a reasonable footing in respect to revenual claims. This intervention could no longer be deferred, or redress denied.

24. The restoration of peace and order under the old order of things was however impossible. Administration of justice properly so called had never existed on the islands; there was nothing to restore; while uncivilized conditions had characterized the fiscal and general administration of the Cannanore family to such an extent, that any attempt to re-assert their rule must prove futile, and might, in the face of the exasperation and well-grounded distrust of the people and of the unreasoning pretensions of the Rajah, lead to bloodshed. The old order of things must at once give place to sound direct administration of the Government under every head.

25. Reviewing at great length the past history of the islands and the reports then before Government, Mr. Robinson summed up by saying that all hesitation as to the course to be followed was now removed.

26. The administration of criminal and civil justice in all the islands must forthwith be permanently assumed by the Government without reference to the wishes of the Rajah of Cannanore; and his further connection with the collection of

revenue and fiscal administration—which had broken down through misfeasance—must cease for ever.

27. With regard to justice, the authority of the Legislature must be sought to extend the provisions of Act XXIV of 1839 to the entire group of islands.

28. With regard to a fiscal system, the basis of any settlement now to be made with the islanders must, for obvious reasons, exclude entirely and for all future time, the intervention of the Rajah in its management or collection. It must exclude him in the same manner and for the same causes that led to the supersession of the various native Rajahs from intervention in the judicial and fiscal administration of the province of Malabar from the first years of the English rule. The execution of the settlements made in 1793 and 1796 in respect to the islands had been deferred from a variety of causes, and the provisional condition still subsisted. The extension to them of the normal Malabar settlement was now forced on the State by disorder on all sides and could no longer be deferred in the interests of the public revenue and of the people.

29. Of the systems of fiscal arrangement suggested from time to time, Mr. Robinson greatly preferred that of the coir monopoly already in existence in the four southern islands.

Though theoretically open to objections, it had the commendation of long prescription and the goodwill of the people, by whom it was thoroughly understood and appreciated. It could be worked under the Canara system, which before the Rajah had introduced innovations, had in the main obtained on the Cananore islands likewise.

If hereafter a change was deemed advisable, on theoretical or practical grounds, it could be inaugurated with the advantage of knowledge acquired of the resources of the islands, and of restored confidence and order amongst the people.

30. Pending orders of the Government of India on the larger question, the Collector should be ordered to attach the islands again for arrears of peshkash, and to assume the administration of the coir monopoly, and the whole case should be submitted to the Government of India with recommendation that the Local Government should, without reference to the wishes of the Rajah, be allowed to resume the administration of the islands finally, subject to an equitable malikana pension.

Lord Hobart's Minute, dated December 7th, 1874.

31. Lord Hobart concurred. The case, he said, for the permanent assumption of the islands by the British Government, appeared to be complete. As regarded the right to annex the islands on equitable terms, it seemed impossible to dispute that in the words of Government in a former proceedings " there was not, and never had been, any engagement which would prevent the Government from introducing into these islands the system of administration which prevailed in other parts of India should the conduct of the islanders or of the representative of the Cannanore family render such a course necessary." That such a contingency had long since occurred was also beyond dispute. All the information before Government showed that the Rajah has so worked his coir monopoly and other fiscal powers as to oppress and impoverish the people beyond endurance, with the result that they had been driven to escape by systematic smuggling from the coir monopoly altogether—a proceeding which the Rajah on his part had repaid by every kind of vexatious tyranny on the part of his agents on the islands. Justice appeared to be now unknown to the islanders: and the picture was one of complete social disorganization. Attempts had been for a long time made to induce the Rajah to reform: he replied only by asking the Government to protect his coir monopoly; and it certainly could not be said that in now resorting to extreme measures Government would be acting abruptly and without due warning. On the contrary, it would be doing that which was imperatively demanded by the long-neglected interests and by the earnestly expressed wishes of the islanders, and for which the Rajah had been long prepared by earnest and friendly remonstrance and reiterated caution.

32. As regarded the details of the political arrangements to be made, it would probably be desirable to apply the system of administration obtaining in the islands adjacent to South Canara; the evil of over-government should be carefully avoided: very simple provisions appeared to be required. As to fiscal administration, the retention of the existing coir monopoly should be adopted in preference to any of the modes of raising a revenue which had been suggested. It was simple; it was that obtaining in the sister islands; it had been shown by experience, when properly worked, to be fairly productive to the revenue; above all, it was not open to the serious objection attending all novelty in fiscal taxation imposts as applied to an uncivilized and uninstructed population.

33. With respect to the compensation to be made to the Rajah, a malikana of Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 might be granted in addition to Rs. 5,250 which had long been conceded, with whatever justice, to the Rajah in respect of the loss of the Canarese islands.

THE HON'BLE MR. SIM'S MINUTE, DATED DECEMBER 28TH, 1874.

34. Mr. J. D. Sim also concurred that the time had arrived when the Government must interpose for the permanent and effectual protection of the inhabitants of the Laccadive islands. Out of consideration for the Cannanore family it had carried forbearance to the extreme; further tolerance of their misrule would be a culpable dereliction of duty. It had waited long and patiently, and done all in its power to induce each successive Rajah to reform his administration. Its efforts had been fruitless, and the character of the present head of the family was not such as to warrant the slightest hope that he would do otherwise than his predecessors have done. The islanders driven to despair had now peaceably but decidedly set aside his authority, and the interposition of the State was now a necessity. Government could no longer ignore their wrongs, or evade its duties.

35. The proposal for the permanent resumption of the islands was fully justified and nothing short of that extreme measure would meet the exigencies of the case. Government had managed them once, and as soon as they were restored, matters became as bad as ever. Hope of eventual restoration should not be held out because the islands from their position were far removed from the control and supervision of Government, and because it was impossible to predicate just administration by any future Rajah. In justice to the people who had suffered so long and so peaceably, protection should be afforded them in all time to come. Such consideration as was due to the Cannanore family should take the form of a liberal malikana. Long-continued misrule and oppression such as had ever characterised the administration of that family were in themselves sufficient grounds for forfeiture, but in this case the family had really no rights at all save such as had arisen from sufferance. The agreement of 1793 expressly notified the intention of Government to resume the islands; that of 1796 on which so much reliance was placed by the family had never been ratified, and even if it had been, would have been of no avail, as it expressly reserved the agreement of 1793.

36. The absolute necessity of permanently assuming the islands, giving the Rajah a malikana of 20 per cent., the rate usual in Malabar in such cases, should be urged on the Government of India and the Secretary of State. Meanwhile, the attachment of the islands should be ordered for the arrears which the Rajah could not pay, and was not likely ever to be able to pay, as the islanders had shaken off his authority and would forcibly resist any attempt by him to restore it.

37. For some years the monopoly system which the people understood and liked should be adhered to, but every encouragement should be held out for the substitution of an export duty or a share of the produce.

THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT PROPOSES PERMANENT RESUMPTION OF THE ISLANDS.

38. On the 17th February 1875, these Minutes, together with a collection of papers and a précis, were forwarded to the Government of India, with the request that under the circumstances disclosed, the sanction of the Government of India might be

Political letter, No. 108.

accorded to the permanent resumption of the islands held on peshkash by the head of the Cannanore family, and to the grant to Ali Rajah and his successors of a malikana or compensatory stipend of 20 per cent. on the normal revenue. This pension would amount to between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 4,000 per annum, and would be in addition to the sum of Rs. 5,250 annually disbursed to him in respect of the group of islands of which his ancestors had been deprived by the Sultan of Mysore; and which, on the death of Tippu, were ceded to the East India Company, as portion of the district of Canara.

39. In the meantime, following the course taken in 1854, the Governor in Council had deemed it incumbent on him to attach the islands for arrears of peshkash, Rs. 54,000 having accumulated under this head.

40. As regards fiscal administration, it was the intention of Government to continue the monopoly in coir which obtained in the sister islands under the management of the Collector of South Canara, was fairly productive, and was the system to which the population was accustomed.

41. The question of civil and criminal justice would be separately dealt with in communication with the Government of India under the powers assigned by the "Excepted Districts" Act.

The Islands attached for Arrears.

G.O., No. 119-A.

42. On the 22nd February 1875, the Collector was directed to attach the islands.

The Government of India refuse to assent to the permanent Transfer of the Islands.

Foreign letter, No. 594 P., March 2nd, 1876.

43. Orders were not passed by the Government of India for upwards of a year. Approval of the action of the Madras Government in attaching the islands was then expressed, but the Government of India was not prepared to assent to their permanent transfer to British rule.

44. The islands could remain in sequestration until the arrears of tribute are cleared off, and meanwhile the Madras Government should organize and submit for approval a proper system of fiscal and judicial administration, and it could be intimated to Ali Rajah that the restoration of the islands to the management of himself and his successors would be conditional on his engaging to retain the agency and the system introduced by the British Government.

45. The grant to Ali Rajah and his successors of a malikana of 20 per cent. on the normal revenue of the islands was sanctioned for such period as the islands remained in sequestration.

The Madras Government remonstrates against the Terms of the Decision.

Confidential.

Political letter, No. 180, March 22nd, 1876.

46. Against the expression *permanent transfer to British rule*, a remonstrance was made by the Madras Government on receipt of this letter. It was submitted for the consideration of the Governor-General in Council that the expression used was calculated to lead to serious misconception, inasmuch as no doubt had been raised as to the islands being subject to the authority of the Power Paramount whenever it was thought fit to exercise it, and much mischief might ensue if a contrary impression were created in the minds of either the inhabitants of the islands or the Cannanore family.

47. The Government of India intended, it was understood, to disallow the proposal that the Madras Government should assume the direct administration of the islands. It was suggested that the language of the decision might be modified, so as to preclude a more extended meaning being assigned to it.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HOLDS THAT THE ISLANDS IF PERMANENTLY ASSUMED MUST BE ANNEXED.

Foreign letter, No. 1032, B.P. Confidential, April 29th, 1876.

48. In reply, the Government of India stated that the expression to which exception had been taken was used advisedly.

49. Looking at the history of the islands since the end of the last century, it appeared clear that the sovereign rights acquired by the British Government in 1792 had ceased to exist. For upwards of half a century after cession the islands had remained *de facto* a Native State under the Government of the Chiefs of Cannanore, and all claim of the British Government *de jure* to their sovereignty must, after so long a period, be deemed to have lapsed, and even were a claim *de jure* possible, notwithstanding lapse of time, such claim was deliberately waived in 1850, when the Court of Directors recorded its decision that "the Government had no right to demand the compulsory cession of the islands for a pecuniary equivalent." The Governor-General in Council, therefore, viewed the proposal for the permanent resumption of the islands as in fact a proposal for annexation, and to that measure he was not, he said, at present prepared to assent.

REASONS FOR THIS CONTENTION.

Despatch No. 55, March 9th, 1875.

50. A copy of the despatch which had been addressed to the Secretary of State in Lord Northbrook's time was also forwarded for the information of the Madras Government.

Confidential.

51. In this the Government of India drew a distinction between the southern group of islands and the territory possessed by the Cannanore family on the main land at the time of the second Mysore war. The head of the family joined Tippu and received his garrison into her fort. The place was then attacked and reduced by the English and in the treaty of 1792 with Tippu, all the Cannanore territories were ceded to the British Government, whose right over them was thus full and complete—first by conquest and next by cession. In respect to the territory on the main land, the Cannanore family were ordinary British subjects, and their lands British territory. The case of the islands, and more particularly of Androth, Kalpeni, Kavaratti and Agatti (that of Minicoy being special) was different.

52. In the agreement of 1793, the Bibi bound herself to submit to sequestration of the islands by Government if the Governor-General in Council should so order, and in that of 1796 she agreed to pay Rs. 15,000 yearly on account of the whole of her possessions (island and mainland) and her trade, but it was expressly stipulated that this article of agreement was not to do away, and was not meant to do away, in any shape, with the rights which the Government had to the Laccadive islands.

LAPSE OF SOVEREIGN RIGHTS.

53. It appeared to have been the intention at that time to act fully upon the sovereign rights which Government had acquired, but various circumstances, among others the war with France, occurred to prevent this from being done. And thus it happened that the Cannanore Chiefs continued for more than half a century to retain their powers of administration over the islands. The British Government exercised no interference: the islands were described as a *terra incognita* to the Company's officers, and it is clear from the reports submitted in 1847, when the islands were for the first time after many years officially visited and reported on, that they were in no respect under British laws or administration.

54. In consequence of the maladministration brought to light in 1847, the Collector recommended the transfer of the islands to the direct management of the Company, compensation being made to the Ruler for the loss of sovereignty and profits; but the Court of Directors decided in 1850 that "the Government had no right to demand the compulsory cession of the islands for a pecuniary equivalent." Subsequently, in 1854, in consequence partly of the misrule of the Native Chief,

but mainly of the tributary payment having fallen into arrears, the islands were sequestered; but in 1861 the Native administration was restored, the Secretary of State remarking in his despatch of the 16th January 1861 that if the Bibi "should still refuse to introduce into her administration such reforms as you may consider necessary, she must be distinctly informed that in the event of any acts of oppression or extortion being hereafter proved against her or her agents, Government will not hesitate to place the islands under sequestration in order to compel the introduction of good government."

Confidential.

The Rajah to be given one more Trial.

55. The state of affairs described in the correspondence was such that the Government of India approved of the action of the Madras Government in having placed the islands under sequestration; but before sanctioning their permanent transfer to British rule, thought it would be expedient to try once more whether the Rajah might not be found capable of exercising his functions under such restrictions as the Government of Madras might think it desirable to impose upon him after the arrears of tribute had been cleared off, and the whole system of administration thoroughly reformed. It was not necessary, the Government of India observed, to communicate to the Rajah its opinion that the islands were not part of British territory and that permanent assumption of administration would be an act of annexation.

Lord Salisbury's Doubts.

56. Shortly afterwards the orders of the Secretary of State were received. Lord Salisbury was inclined to think that there was little hope of any permanent reform if the islands were to be restored to the Rajah, but as Lord Lytton's predecessor had determined on the more lenient course, he accorded his sanction to its adoption.

Despatch dated May 18th, 1876.

Mr. Winterbotham's Report of 1877.

57. In February and March 1877, Mr. Winterbotham visited the islands and submitted a report of great interest. Much of it need not be abstracted here, as the points discussed are apart from the main question of government.

58. He and his companion, Captain Phipps, were alike struck with the general air of well-being and content which the inhabitants of all the islands exhibited.

59. The bodies of the poorest were well developed and their skins sleek, showing that the food supply was sufficient and wholesome. Ophthalmia appeared to be the disease to which they were specially subject. From the large number of old people on the islands, the average duration of life might be supposed to be higher than on the coast. The islanders were better clothed and better housed than the same class in Malabar, and there was a happy absence of anything approaching to want or distress.

60. When it was remembered that they had been entirely self-dependent and free from external control for the last fifteen years, their existing condition was good evidence that they knew how to take care of themselves and that the necessity (which had been asserted) of employing a Government official to expend their money for them was purely chimerical.

Inveterate Objection of Islanders to the Rajah's Rule.

61. On Mr. Winterbotham telling them that Government had only attached the islands for a time because the Rajah had not paid his rent, and that, as the islands would probably be returned to him, his presumptive claims must be maintained, they were loud in their protestations that they would never voluntarily take another bale of coir to Cannanore, that they looked to the Sarkar for protection, and that nothing but superior force should make them submit to the Rajah's rule. At Androth, Kavaratti and Agatti, they continued to exhibit as their Magna Carta copies of the judgments in an Original Suit of 1852 on the file of the Calicut Subordinate Court, and in an appeal, 1853, on the file of the Zillah Court, by which

suits the Bibi vainly endeavoured to establish her legal right to the monopoly. Their desire for the permanent introduction of the British rule, no doubt, sprang entirely from motive of self-interest. They knew that the Cannanore family would always squeeze out of them as much as possible and had not the power to relieve them from famine as the Madras Government had done on several occasions, and they hoped to recover the Pandaram lands. They were not sufficiently bigoted to prefer the rule of one of their own race and religion to the superior advantage of being under British government, and they had, moreover, a genuine admiration for such sahibs as they had come across as being the only persons who had honestly endeavoured to promote their interests.

62. The position appeared to be a delicate one, and the Government ran much risk of being charged with insincerity if, while the islands were under attachment, its officials exacted from the islanders all that the Cannanore family was wont to consider its dues. Twenty-three years ago the highest Court in the district had refused to assist the Bibi in her attempt to enforce the coir, cowry and tortoise-shell monopolies; the Government had * exhorted the Rajah to abandon his claim to them, and the only ground on which they could consistently be re-imposed was that the islanders wished it. Their wish for the re-introduction of the monopoly was, however, subject to the provisos that Government assumed the direct administration of the islands and introduced the Canara system in its entirety.

* Political Proceedings, No. 405, December 20th, 1871.

63. As to the two leading questions that called for decision—

(1) How the four northern islands were to be administered?

(2) In what manner the revenue should be collected?

Mr. Winterbotham answered the first by observing that it could answer no useful purpose to extend any of the laws in force in British India to the islands until agents fit to administer them could be found, and in regard to the second, he considered that the revenue should be raised by an export duty paid in kind in the products of the cocoanut palm in the manner already proposed by Mr. MacGregor and Mr. Logan. The islanders would make no objection to the change if satisfied that their present burdens were not to be increased; and as the coir, cowry and tortoise-shell monopolies had not the sanction of positive law, the raising of a revenue by an export duty would be every whit as legal as the method then in force. The change of system would leave the islanders in enjoyment of free trade; it involved no difficulties or additional expense, and, by levying the duty equally on cocoanuts, coir, copra and jaggery, the islanders would be deprived of all motive for managing their trees except in the way most conducive to their health and productiveness. How the coir monopoly tempted the islanders to let their cocoanuts ripen (whereby a higher price was obtained for the nut, but the husk unfitted for the manufacture of coir) or to manufacture jaggery at seasons when it injured the tree to drain it of its juice, had already been pointed out by Sir William Robinson and Mr. Logan.

64. For Minicoy, where there were no monopolies, and the revenue was derived from a poll tax on coir and sugar, from a tax on vessels trading with Bengal and on fishing boats, from rents for garden land belonging to the Rajah and from the sale of cocoanuts from his private grounds, the existing fiscal arrangements had better not be altered until competent officials and means for communicating freely with the Mahl-speaking body of the people could be found.

65. Regarding the condition of each island —

Kalpeni had a population of 1,029, with 84 cattle and 122 goats. Nearly three-quarters of the island was covered with a dense scrub jungle, mostly on the Pandaram or Government lands, and there was a bad blight, attacking one-fourth of the palm trees, under which the leaves shrivelled up, the nuts dropped off, and the very trunk rotted away. Asked whether they would clear patches of the jungle and form plantations, if given leases on favorable terms, the assembled people said No: they had employment enough already. There was (what there was not in any other island) serious sickness, possibly due to the rotten sea-weed and coral on the wide stretches of mud left exposed at low water. A system of rack-renting by auction was in force.

Androth had a population of 2,629, with 244 cattle and 300 goats. The same blight, here affecting one in twenty trees, as in Kalpeni, was devastating the island, and planting was at a stand-still. There was very little jungle except on the Government land at the west end, and this the islanders were unwilling to clear away, and would not undertake to do so, unless an assurance was given them that the land would not be taken from them if the islands were given back to the Rajah.

Kavaratti had a population of 2,016: how many cattle and goats was not ascertained. There was no change in it since 1848, when Mr. Robinson found it well planted from end to end, with less waste ground than any of the larger inhabited islands, and a fine soil.

Agatti had a population of 1,290, with 151 cattle and 34 goats. It was as sterile as ever, and many of the palm trees dwarfed and fruitless. The southern end of the jungle was overran with scrub, although most of it belonged to the islanders; the cause, a *Shaitan*, who tormented trespassers by night, and would come and live in the inhabited part of the island if the jungle were burnt.

Minicoy had a population of 2,800. No cattle owing to the rank grass, and no goats because of the voracious mosquitos. The men monogamous, and like to remain so, as the women would not agree to the abrogation of the custom. Lepers segregated from time immemorial, the Qazi pronouncing whether the leprosy was contagious and expelling the man smitten by it to a special place at the north end of the island. There were nine such out-casts when Mr. Winterbotham was there.

The whole island was covered by dense jungle, and no laborers to clear it: the women would not occupy themselves in this way, while half the men were away from the island for eight months in the year—perhaps a third of the remainder engaged in the maas fishery, and others toddy-drawers or old and decrepit.

Many trees had only three or four nuts, and it was surprising that the rats should have left even these. The produce was capable of a tenfold increase by a clearance of the jungle and rats.

Mr. Logan's Views.

66. Mr. Logan, the Collector, concurred with Mr. Winterbotham in respect to the main fiscal question connected with the four northern islands, viz., whether or not the coir monopoly should be retained or superseded by some other system. For a long time he had held that the monopoly could not be retained if the islands were to be again handed back to the Rajah; and that opinion remained unchanged. Mr. Spedding, it was true, had reported that the islanders wished to retain the monopoly, and he himself was in favor of such an arrangement; but the kind of monopoly referred to was one that would be administered by the Government, and not by the Rajah, and the islanders, it further appeared, anticipated that, if the monopoly was retained, the whole of the Rajah's private landed property in the island would be made over to them free of rent, as was done in Amini and the Canara islands. It was needless to say that this would be a wholesale act of spoliation which would not be justified under any circumstances.

Favours an Export Duty.

67. He remained of opinion that an export duty levied on all the produce of the cocoanut, such as he had already recommended, would be the best system that could be introduced. As, however, a special product like Laccadive coir sold better when offered in the market in large quantities, the duty had better not be levied in kind. The system would not give the Government the command of the market that the monopoly system gave, and adequate prices might not be realized for the small quantities which the Government would be able to offer. It would be preferable to allow the islanders to dispose of their produce themselves, and to charge an export duty payable in cash and on the mainland. The system would not be extended to Minicoy, where the coir monopoly had never been in force.

68. As, however, the islands would certainly remain under sequestration for a long years, Mr. Logan requested that some further time might be allowed before he was required to make his final proposals.

THE REVENUE BOARD'S COMMENTS.

The Board supported this request. It would be, they said, to the advantage of all concerned, to take deliberate action in the matter in lieu of submitting proposals at an early period for changes in the existing system which subsequent experience would probably show to require modification. Under the Collector's management, the interests of the islanders would be duly cared for, and as was evidenced by Mr. Winterbotham's report, they possessed a wonderful aptitude for self-government, under which there was an almost entire absence of grave crime.

ALSO FAVOUR SUBSTITUTION OF EXPORT DUTY FOR THE MONOPOLY.

69. As regarded the coir monopoly, the Board considered Mr. Logan's grounds for recommending its abolition to be sound, and in the Bill for amending the Sea Customs Law power might be taken to prohibit exportation from specified places of any particular class of goods except to specified ports.

THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT AVERSE TO MOVE.

Political Proceedings, No. 416, July 2nd, 1877.

70. The Government in passing orders said that further experience should be gained before the submission of final proposals for the introduction of any fiscal or judicial arrangements, which it would be obligatory on the Rajah to retain in force after the islands had been restored to him. As the law then stood, the Collector's proposal to charge an export duty, payable in cash and on the mainland, could not be given effect to. The fiscal system prevailing in Minicoy should receive careful consideration when determining on proposals with regard to the four northern islands.

71. There was probably no present necessity for introducing into the islands the criminal law in force on the mainland, and the same remark held good with reference to civil law. Experience seemed to point most clearly to the advisability of abandoning the present system of deputing Amins from the mainland, and to the propriety of conducting the administration in future by means of the islanders themselves, as far as this could possibly be done.

72. The islands should be visited annually by a covenanted officer.

MR. LOGAN RENEWS PROPOSALS FOR AN EXPORT DUTY.

73. In October 1877, Mr. Logan suggested that the collection of an export duty on the cocoanut produce from the Laccadive islands might be attained in a different way if it were made compulsory on the islanders that before their produce left the islands they should pay the duty thereon to the Amin. On the point of compulsion there could be no difficulty, as the islands being a scheduled district with no positive law in force therein, any administrative order that might be given acquired at once the force of law. This would not be so effectual a plan as that proposed before, but it might be worked.

THE REVENUE BOARD SUPPORT HIM.

Political Proceedings, No. 662, November 28th, 1877.

74. The Board supported the proposal. The system might be tried with advantage and legislative sanction was not thought to be required.

THE GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE THE PROPOSAL.

The Government, however, rejected it.

Mr. Winterbotham's Report of 1878.

75. In December 1877 and the first two months of 1878, Mr. Winterbotham spent some time in Androth, Kavaratti and Agatti, being unable to reach Kalpeni or Minicoy. He was pressed by the islanders for information as to what Government intended to do with them when the arrears of peshkash were paid off. His reply to all their inquiries was that he had no instructions on the subject, and throughout his intercourse with them he carefully avoided encouraging them in the idea that they had permanently escaped from the hands of the Cannanore family. However, after the unusual opportunity he had of learning their sentiments, he did not hesitate to affirm that their resolve to have nothing more to do with the Rajah continued so unanimous and sincere that it was an element which was likely to upset all calculations if it was left out of account when the question as to whether the islands were to be restored to the Rajah came up for consideration.

76. As to the individual islands :—At Androth the cocoanut disease had disappeared most suddenly and that the trees were recovering their vigour. Mr. Winterbotham attempted to survey the coast line and to mark out the boundaries of the Pandaram land, giving out the waste parts of it on liberal planting leases. These the islanders were eager to obtain, for the Androth palms were reckoned more productive than those on the other islands and were just then in their prime. He found that, as matters stood, the chief men had no motive for good behaviour. Since the islands were first visited by a European, they had lost all the privileges that made their post a coveted one. They were formerly distinguished by a title of honor; they had the exclusive privilege of wearing gold ornaments and sandals, and of using umbrellas; they were entitled to a morsel of meat when a bullock was slaughtered, to a piece of fish from each successful haul, and to a fee from the parties for settling disputes. Now their sole distinctions were a seat on a mat in Court when a European visited the island, and the privilege of being addressed by him and his clerks in the honorific form of the pronoun. The difficulty was to devise any means of rendering the post an object of ambition, and to make the chief men feel that they were individually known and their doings watched; and that the disgrace of being struck off the list of recognised chief men was one to be avoided. As a beginning each chief man might receive a sanad from the Collector.

Kavaratti was next visited. Here various reforms were introduced; certain restrictions as to dwelling on the land removed; the trees assessed at a moderate rate; reserved Pandaram lands plotted and the plantations on them leased out. Some of the islanders proposed to emigrate to Suheli and plant a colony there, clear the jungle, kill the rats and plant up the waste. Mr. Winterbotham considered that to make such project successful, it should have a European in it, to accompany the colonists, divide the land, count the trees and assess the tenants. He had not the time (a fortnight was required) to go there himself, but considered that the time would be well spent.

Agatti and the neighbouring islets Bangaram and Tinnakara were next inspected. The latter had an almost impenetrable jungle, screw-pine over thirty feet in height, abominable water, a plague of rats, mosquitos, large blue-bottle flies. Mr. Winterbotham considered that the proper way to deal with these islets was to set fire to the jungle just when the first monsoon showers were beginning and to burn as much of it as possible.

This would at any rate dispose of most of the rats, blue-bottles and mosquitos. To clear the jungle by any other means was out of the question. A former Cannanore Rajah, he was told, had once imported a ship-load of Cherumars from Malabar and attempted the task of felling the jungle, but the mosquitos and blue-bottles proved too much for them. By cutting proper fire-traces to prevent the flames spreading too rapidly, the Bangaram jungle might be burnt without doing any great damage to the palms. If the jungle could be cleared there were plenty of islanders anxious to lease and plant up the land.

Here, as elsewhere, there had been a general failure in the cocoanut crop. The Agatti people had found a strange means of living for their surplus male

population. From 100 to 200 of the men came over to Calicut every year, when the fine season began, and lodged together in or near the big bazaar. On Mondays and Fridays they each visited one or two Mahomedan houses and chanted portions of the Quran as masses for the dead. In return for this they were fed throughout the week gratis. During their leisure they embroidered silk topees of a fashion worn by the Singalese. A fair workman made two topees a month and netted Rs. 10. Before the monsoon began they returned to the island with their savings. The boat-owners did not approve of this custom, for it made their tenants too independent and disinclined to serve as sailors.

77. On all the islands there was a scarcity of salt and also of rice.

At such a juncture the value of the garden land at Androth—honey-combed with its small excavated plots, and where there was not a family that had not a little patch of tottam land from which came thrice in a year crops of sweet potatoes, and yams, pumpkins, plantains and dry grain withal,—was manifested.

At Kavaratti the islanders grew nothing edible but cocoanuts and bread-fruit, and at Agatti even the bread-fruit with its short-lived crop was scarce. The Kavaratti and Agatti islanders had therefore nothing to live upon but the produce of the palm tree (of that the poorest family could get plenty), with a scanty supply of fish and poultry.

78. Minicoy Mr. Winterbotham reported on, though he did not visit. None of the islands suffered so much as it from misgovernment. As if the islanders had not difficulties enough to contend against in their isolated position and unknown tongue, the Rajah's dog-in-the-manger sort of policy hardly yielded them standing room on their native soil, and left it an unproductive jungle infested by vermin. What language was strong enough to adequately condemn a system which cooped up the inhabitants in a corner of their little island and forced them to leave nine-tenths of the land a wilderness of rank jungle, bringing forth nothing in abundance but rats, mosquitoes, and agues?

Of late years times had grown harder for them. There were now only five vessels that traded with Bengal, and these only required 33 men each to man them. The three small vessels and the seven maas-boats provided a precarious livelihood for about 150 more, and the rest of the men, if they were to get a livelihood from the sea, must seek it elsewhere.

There was no prospect of the Cannanore Rajah being again able to employ any considerable number of the islanders in his vessels, for the days when he could engage profitably in trade were past, and it now seemed to be the bounden duty of the English Government to insist on the opportunity being given to the islanders of renting land on reasonable terms. It was true that in the course of generations the islanders had learnt from sheer necessity to look to the sea for a livelihood until custom had become a second nature, but if the land were thrown open to them on liberal terms many of them would take to the cultivation of the cocoanut in preference to a sea-faring life, involving years of separation from their homes. A European should be sent to survey the island and divide it into plots, and the islanders be invited to take those plots on lease at a rent of so much an acre, on the condition that the jungle was cleared within a fixed number of years.

Until the jungle was cleared it would be useless to attempt to count the palm trees, but it was known that about 70 trees would grow on an acre; if the plot be covered with trees, a maximum rate per acre might be taken, and, by a rough guess at the number of trees, the rent varied with sufficient fairness to meet the circumstances of each plot. If this plan were adopted, Mr. Winterbotham felt no doubt that in the course of a generation or two the island would be as clear of jungle as Kavaratti or Androth, and that there would be a large increase in the revenue.

If it turned out that the islanders did not want any land, the experiment would at least have served to prove that the system of preserving the jungle and the vermin suited them.

Mr. Logan's Views on the Monopoly and other Questions.

79. Mr. Logan, after noticing the financial position, turned to the question of the future administration of the islands, and discoursed in turn on coir monopoly, administration of the Pandaram lands, island accounts and annual settlement, registration of deeds, civil disputes and criminal justice.

80. On the first point he urged that Mr. MacGregor, Mr. Winterbotham, and himself had been unanimous in recommending the abolition of the monopoly and the substitution of an export duty on cocoanut produce, and further consideration and experience had only served to confirm him in the views already expressed. He gathered from the orders of Government on the subject that the proposed alteration was thought to be a beneficial one, but that the machinery for working it was considered defective. Whether that was so or not could only be tested by experiment. He strongly recommended that he might be allowed to put the proposal to the practical test of experiment in any one (Androth perhaps for choice) of the islands. The results would be duly and faithfully recorded, and the export duty would be levied at the island, not on the mainland.

81. As to the Pandaram lands and the best form of improving lease, Mr. Logan wrote much. He was convinced that Mr. Winterbotham's contention as to the meaning of Pandaram was well founded. The lands ought to be regarded as (to put it shortly) Crown lands, not lands the private property of the Rajah. The Rajah viewed them as his own janmam (fee simple) property. But no such right had ever existed. It was clear from previous reports and from the existing state of the facts on the islands at the time that the janmam (birth) right in the soil was unknown. *The property there (as between individuals) lay in the trees not in the land on which the trees are planted.* This was doubtless the original state of property in Malabar likewise. Janmam and the subordinate titles to land were all words of Sanskrit origin introduced by the Aryans into Malabar. The islands were most probably peopled before the Aryan influence in Malabar made itself paramount; and so, as the islands remained outside the Aryan influence, Aryan land tenures never obtained a footing there. The original colonists went there accompanied by their servants who were either sailors or tree-climbers, a distinction still kept up. The servants cleared the jungle and planted trees at their masters' bidding; the masters gave their servants trees in return for services performed in manning boats, cultivating the tottam (garden), or tending the fruit trees, but no right to the soil seemed ever to have been thought of till of recent years. Hence the quarrels which arose when the Rajah endeavoured to import mainland notions on the subject of janmam.

It followed that the Rajah's contention that all waste land was his own private janmam property was quite untenable. Waste lands should be viewed strictly as Crown property and leased out as such on reasonable terms.

82. The other points dealt with by Mr. Logan need not be summarised.

The Revenue Board again support Proposal for Abolition of Monopoly.

83. The Revenue Board supported the proposal to give the export system a trial at Androth.

The Question shelved during Mr. Logan's Absence.

84. The Government, however, would not sanction the experiment during Mr. Logan's absence on furlough. It had been opposed to the total abolition of the coir monopoly, as the step was surrounded with difficulties and could not be easily retraced. Things should remain as they were till Mr. Logan's return; he could report the particulars of his scheme when worked out.

G.O., No. 72, Feb. 23rd, 1880.

85. In 1879 no one visited the islands, and the annual report was reviewed in the Government Proceedings above-mentioned.

Mr. Brodie's Report of 1880.

86. In 1880 Mr. Brodie spent some time at Androth, Kalpeni and Agatti, calling at Kavaratti, Sureli, not before visited, and Minicoy. He submitted a voluminous report, the value of which was detracted from by misapprehensions as to the ideas of property among the islanders. He surveyed Kalpeni and Agatti and demarcated various plots.

87. The number of (*a*) people and (*b*) boats compared as shown below with that in 1876 :—

		1876.	1880.
Androth	(*a*)	2,629	2,599
	(*b*)	162	202
Kalpeni	(*a*)	1,029	1,137
	(*b*)	83	86
Agatti	(*a*)	1,290	1,264
	(*b*)	...	...
Kavaratti	(*a*)	2,016	1,979
	(*b*)	...	...
Minicoy	(*a*)	2,800	3,195
	(*b*)	...	...

Mr. Brodie ascribed the rapid increase under (*b*) at Androth as attributable in part to increased prosperity under the British administration ; the people receiving very fair prices for monopoly articles and being exempt from extraordinary demands of the *nazr* class.

Suheli (a coral shoal forty miles south-west of Kavaratti) was found to be overrun with jungle ; the soil apparently rich.

Bangaram, Tinnagara and Parli, situated near Agatti, but within a distinct range of reefs, were rented out on a lease of three years for Rs. 1,220.

Mr. Logan submits Proposals for an Export Duty.

88. A memorandum by Mr. Logan, working out his export scheme,

The Rajah desires to resume Management of the Islands.

and a proposal from Ali Rajah to pay up the balance of his arrears of peshkash and resume the management of the islands, were submitted by the Revenue Board at the same time as Mr. Brodie's report.

89. As to the Rajah's proposal, its acceptance would, the Board observed, be unfair to himself and the consequences to the islanders disastrous.

Restoration of Islands declined.

90. Government declined to accede to the Rajah's request. During the interval, since the islands were sequestered, the administration had been improved in many ways, and new agency had been introduced, but the reforms were still incomplete. The Rajah's administration, which induced proposals for assumption, had been so utterly bad as to imperatively demand measures of thorough reform, not only for the sake of the people, but in the interests of the Rajah himself, whose income was threatened with extinction, while the people were driven into defiance of all control, and no proposal of the Rajah could be entertained which would practically result in neutralizing the political action of Government. The withdrawal of the direct administration of Government was impracticable, until a system which could be accepted as complete and satisfactory, should have been thoroughly established.

G.O., No. 569, November 14, 1887.

Alternative Scheme to Mr. Logan's propounded by Government.

91. As to Mr. Logan's scheme, Government believed that an arrangement under which a certain amount of coir would be received in kind and sold for the State

account would, in a rude society, such as that of the Laccadives, be more in accordance with principle than either monopoly of the produce at a fixed price or an export duty. Mr. Underwood, then visiting the Laccadives, was desired to report on this suggestion; and meanwhile Mr. Logan was to frame an estimate of the revenue assessable on each of the islands, and the proportionate amount to be provided in the event of the abolition of the monopoly.

Mr. Underwood's Report of 1882.

92. Mr. Underwood's visit in the winter of 1881-82 was five months in duration. He nearly completed the survey of the Crown lands in Minicoy and he finished surveying those in Kalpeni.

93. At Minicoy the condition of the people was in Mr. Underwood's opinion simply deplorable; hunger and fever were eating them up; the imported rice was filthy; most persons were partly blind; and they had unwholesome habits of sleeping without proper ventilation. Androth and Kalpeni he considered by far the healthiest of the islands; there was plenty of open land for the goats to pasture on; there was a sufficient supply of milk, an ample supply of fresh vegetables.

Mr. Logan proposes to regulate the Assessment by the density of Population.

Mr. Underwood's apparently overdrawn picture of Minicoy miseries was not noticed in Mr. Logan's covering letter. With reference to the last Government order Mr. Logan said that the islands should all be treated alike when the export duty system was introduced, and he could not suggest anything better than that the density of the population should be used for determining roughly the amount of revenue assessable on each island.

The Revenue Board hold that the Islanders have Rights in the Soil.

94. The Board's Proceedings insisted on certain abstract principles regarding the soil. They thought that the actual cultivator's right in it ought to be steadily kept in view, so as to prevent oppression and rack-renting of actual cultivators by mere capitalists. To effect this end, it was clear that the actual cultivator must have a saleable interest in his holding, and be protected from ejectment, and thrift and industry must be encouraged.

There was in these islands an excellent opportunity (which should not be lost) for thoroughly establishing the security of the actual cultivator, while creating private property in the soil.

95. With regard to the Androth experiment, its effect should be carefully watched.

The Government calls for an Examination into the Lease System.

96. The Government called the attention of the Collector to the Revenue Board's remarks, and desired the lease system to be examined.

G.O., No. 374, May 14, 1883.

97. The islands were not visited in 1882-83.

The Revenue Board on the Miseries of the Islanders.

98. The Collector's report in 1883 was merely financial, but in their review the Revenue Board quoted the remarks of Mr. Winterbotham in 1880 and of Mr. Underwood in 1882, regarding the condition of the people in Minicoy, to alleviate which, nothing had been done; and observed that minor financial considerations fell into the shade by the side of the glaring necessity for alleviating the misery of the islanders.

The Board seem in this resolution to have supposed that the remarks which applied to Minicoy applied also to all the islands.

Remarks by Government.

G.O., No. 152, March 5, 1884.

99. The orders of Government were confined to a recapitulation of what it had said the year before.

Mr. Tate's Report of 1884.

100. In the beginning of 1884, Mr. Tate visited Androth, Agatti, Kavaratti and Kalpeni.

Islanders' Opposition to Export Duty System.

101. At Androth he was well satisfied with what he saw: nearly all the cowle holders had planted sufficiently. He discussed the export duty system with the islanders, and found that they were thoroughly opposed to it. Under the monopoly system, they had—so they argued—no trouble in disposing of the coir; they got a fixed price without bargaining; they had an immediate market for their coir, which if they sold to merchants, they would not have as the merchants would delay purchasing in order to beat down prices, knowing that the islanders must return before the monsoon; the price of coir was liable to vary enormously, and in the event of its falling as low as it had done at times, they would not have enough to subsist on.

In short they preferred the certain competency afforded by the monopoly system to the uncertain gains or losses of any other.

The Alternative Scheme suggested by Government unfeasible.

102. Their objections applied equally to the scheme suggested by Government in 1881. Against that scheme there were other grave objections, and as Laccadive opinion pronounced itself against such a system, it might be dismissed.

103. At the other islands, Mr. Tate's work was mainly surveying and need not be summarized.

He completed the survey and demarcation of all the four islands. A census was taken, the result of which is entered below :—

	People.	Cattle.	Goats.	Vessels and boats.
Androth	2,868	125	179	183
Agatti	1,244	118	90	139
Kavaratti	1,949	245	230	152
Kalpeni	1,181	97	153	94

Mr. Galton's Views.

104. In submitting this report, Mr. Galton took occasion to refer to a letter from Mr. Brodie in which it was pointed out that the notion of janmam, or property in the soil, had been gaining ground in the islands every day, and that much had been done to strengthen the notion in that, since the date of Mr. Winterbotham's first visit in 1876, the British officials had been demarcating and surveying the land, not marking the trees, and had leased out many plots so demarcated with the right to plant additional trees within the area so leased. Mr. Brodie observed that no island proprietor would now allow an outsider to plant a young cocoanut or anything else amongst his trees, except as his servant and on the distinct understanding that the tree should be his and not the planter's. The limited nature of the property which was originally possessed had, Mr. Brodie imagined, long ago been lost sight of, and rights in the soil were now fully recognized on the islands.

OPPOSES ALTERING THE MONOPOLY SYSTEM.

105. Mr. Galton ventured to dissent from his predecessors, who were entitled to speak with greater authority on a question of the kind, but, to his mind, there was no advantage whatever in altering the present system. The disclosure of the malpractices which were rife in the Rajah's time had led to the consideration of a change of system; the prices paid were inadequate, the islanders were exposed to petty exactions and delay in the settlement of their accounts, and the consequence was that the monopoly was unpopular. Under the management of Government officers, these evils had been removed, and the islanders desired no change. The unpopularity of the system was due to abuses which were not inseparable from it, and the substitution of an export duty might not be productive of any advantage to the people. The arguments put forward by them were very cogent; the monopoly was suited to the rude state of society in the Laccadives, and there was no ground for forcing on them a system which would not suit them nearly as well. The advantages claimed by the proposed export duty on coir were—

(*a*) That a complete check could be kept on the revenue by comparing the collections of the islands with imports on the coast.—As already stated, however, there would be great opportunities for fraud, unless importation were restricted to certain ports on the mainland, in which case the islanders would not be able to seek the best market.

(*b*) There would be no room for dispute as to quality.—The classification was well understood, and the decisions of the Superintendent of Customs were, as a rule, accepted without question.

(*c*) The manufacturers would have an object in improving the quality of their coir.—This argument would be of force if the islanders could afford to stand out for their price, but they must dispose of their produce without delay, and even if they took the trouble to manufacture a better article, it is doubtful whether they would secure better prices all round than at present.

(*d*) The innumerable evils attendant on the monopoly system would be obviated.—Abuses were not inseparable from a monopoly properly conducted, and the evils which formerly prevailed no longer existed. Whatever the mode by which the revenue was raised, measures would have to be adopted to guard against tyranny and exaction when the islands were restored. Should it be decided, however, to try the experiment, it would be necessary to postpone the introduction of it until after the next monsoon, as some boats would have left the islands before the necessary orders could reach the Amins, and forms would have to be supplied with instructions for guidance.

THE REVENUE BOARD CONCUR IN MR. GALTON'S VIEWS.

106. The Board said that they decidedly concurred with Mr. Galton in thinking that there were unanswerable objections to making any change in the present coir monopoly system, which was tenaciously clung to by the islanders and was obviously adapted to their very peculiar circumstances.

THE RAJAH MAKES CERTAIN REQUESTS.

107. In October 1884, it was reported that the compensation payable to Ali Rajah on account of the Amin Divi (S. Canara) islands had been credited towards liquidation of the arrears of peshkash, and those arrears in consequence liquidated. The Rajah made certain proposals which were not clearly expressed. Mr. Brodie, then in charge of the district, thought he was asking for the rendition of the islands, but the Revenue Board understood him to ask for the payment of the Rs. 5,250 per annum and for other sums of money available from the Laccadive revenues in order to spend them at Cannanore; he would seemingly prefer the surer receipt of moneys arising from the better administration by Government officers. In any case, they

said, Ali Rajah must bind himself to conditions of good administration before the question of rendition could be entertained. Meanwhile, a sum of Rs. 5,000 might be paid to him.

108. No action was taken on this request in Mr. Logan's absence.

Mr. Logan renews his Attack on the Monopoly System.

109. Meanwhile, Mr. Logan had written to the Board recapitulating the arguments against the monopoly system of management.

It did not (as experience showed) always pay. Under the monopoly system, as managed by the British Government, the losses of a bad year or series of bad years could be recouped by the gains in good ones, but the Rajah, when bad seasons and low prices supervened, could not afford to lose by it. It was this that had led to the failure of the system in the past and this would wreck the monopoly system in the future if certain suggestions of Mr. Galton's were to be adopted.

It would further be unjust to the Rajah to re-instate him in a position in which sooner or later he was bound to fail. The monopoly system managed by Government officers was one thing, the same system managed by the Rajah's agents was quite a different business. True, the islanders did not desire a change of the monopoly system, and a change would be unnecessary so long as the islands remained "under the management of Government officers." That, however, was not the point. Government had pledged itself to give back the islands to the Rajah, and, before doing so, was bound to introduce a system which could be managed by the Rajah's agents, and not merely to purge the system inherited from him of evils which were bound to crop up again directly the backs of the English officials were turned.

As regarded the proposals for introducing the export duty system of management which had originated with Mr. MacGregor and been under consideration ever since his time, the plan had the manifest advantage of adapting revenue to the state of the seasons; but there were, it must be admitted, difficulties in the way of working it, and these might increase when the islands were handed back to the Rajah.

Alternative of a Land Assessment.

110. Mr. Logan then suggested as an alternative, the introduction of a regular land assessment. That had been condemned by Mr. MacGregor fourteen years before on sound grounds, but with the lapse of time, the aspect was different. The islands were now under the management of the English Government; the chief obstacle to be overcome would be the question of tenant right. The islanders' notions of property residing in trees must be got rid of.

111. The question of export duty had better be held in abeyance until all the islands had been surveyed and improving leases were ready to be given to all landholders. If under the improving lease system, enough revenue did not come in, the export duty might be levied to make up deficiencies.

Remarks by the Revenue Board.

112. The Board were of opinion that the point for primary consideration was not the Rajah's limited powers of management, but the best form of administration in the interests of the islanders. If the Rajah was not competent to carry on the form of administration approved for the islands, it would be a very strong reason for not again entrusting him with their direct management.

113. The continuance of the monopoly system in the modified form suggested by Government in 1881 need not conflict with the Collector's proposals for substituting right in land for right in trees, with improving stimulus. These might be carried out subject to general principles.

THE MONOPOLY SYSTEM CONSIDERED DESIRABLE BY GOVERNMENT.

G.O., No. 292, May 4, 1885.

114. Government, with both the Board's Proceedings before it, said that it entirely concurred in holding that the matter for primary consideration was what should be done in the islanders' interests and that the continuance of the monopoly system was desirable.

115. Payment to the Rajah of the malikana on account of the Amin Divi islands was sanctioned.

MISUNDERSTANDING.

116. The Government in passing this order overlooked the fact that Mr. Logan's suggestions were on the lines of those which it had itself suggested in 1881.

LEVY OF A TREE-TAX PAYABLE IN COIR.

G.O., No. 748, October 28, 1885.

117. Mr. Logan and the Board again discussed the point at length, and a revised order issued.

118. Under the arrangements then existing Government took the whole of the coir produced, paying a fixed rate for the produce. This system Mr. Logan proposed to supersede by a system based on a complete survey and regular land assessment,—the Government taking, in kind, its share of the gross outturn of coir. In other words, a tree-tax was to be levied, payable in coir. Sanction to the introduction of the new system, as soon as the Collector could arrange to have it carried into effect, was now accorded.

COWLES.

A revised form of cowle was at the same time approved, and a long discussed subject—the appointment of a superior magistrate for the islands—was finally set at rest by a decision that no change in the existing arrangements was expedient.

MR. DANCE'S REPORT OF 1885.

119. In December 1884 and again in January 1885, the islands were visited by Mr. Dance.

120. The first visit was merely to appoint a suitable Amin at Minicoy. On the occasion of his second visit, the survey and demarcation of Minicoy was completed.

MINICOY PEOPLE WILL HAVE NONE OF COWLES.

121. His attempt to induce the people to accept cowles was a failure. They would have nothing to do with them. Some melacheries, who had been allowed to settle in one part of the Crown land to draw toddy, were persuaded after some hesitation to accept them. The malikhans, however, influenced them to withdraw their consent.

122. At Kalpeni there were many applications for cowles.

123. In 1886 no one visited the islands for want of a steamer.

MR. LOGAN'S VISIT IN 1887—COWLES FOUND TO BE UNSUITED TO MINICOY.

124. In 1887 Mr. Logan himself visited Minicoy and found that, owing to the curious system of inheritance prevailing there * under which almost all property belonged to the women, the cowle system was badly adapted to the island as it vested property in the men, and the men could not cultivate their holdings and at the same time live in their houses in the village.

* The Muhammadan law engrafted on a system resembling the 'sister's son' system in Malabar but with the important difference that marriage has the effect of transferring a man to the family (goti) of his wife.

125. Mr. Logan consequently had to abandon the idea of introducing the cowle system anywhere but in the village portion of the island. The large block known as the Big South Crown Lands (Pandaram), two-thirds of which were covered by the screwpine jungle, and which was infested by rats to a degree past belief, had thus to be cleared in some other way than the improving cowle system.

126. Mr. Logan concluded to make a beginning at one end of the block, paying the persons who cleared it and reserving small blocks of jungle for their wants. He then quitted the island, leaving Mr. Dance behind.

The Islanders mob Mr. Dance.

127. The affair which then took place needs brief notice. Either because the clearance ordered was against their conservative principles or because a particular individual stirred them up, the islanders assembled in a tumultuous crowd, requiring the dismissal of the Amin and refusing to take any steps to clear the jungle. Under cover of night Mr. Dance left the island.

Second Visit by Mr. Logan in 1887.

128. In February Mr. Logan returned to Minicoy with a small force of policemen. He found that the disturbance had been caused by the sailor-class, numbering more than half the population, and that they had probably been instigated against the Amin by one Dom Malikhan, who possessed great influence and had a grudge against the Amin. There was little real aversion to clearing the jungle, and had this individual given them the word of order, the sailors would have been too glad to do the work and get the pay.

129. Dom Malikhan now entered in an agreement, with a heavy penalty attached, to support the authority of the representative of Government and use his interest and influence to suppress disorders.

130. Mr. Logan next visited Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Agatti *cum* Pitti, and Androth. The islanders were everywhere delighted to see him and he found that under the cowle system every reclaimable acre in the islands would soon be under cultivation.

Mr. Winterbotham's Reports of 1888.

131. In submitting the financial report for 1886-87, Mr. Winterbotham observed that there had been a tremendous fall in the value of coir while the price of rice kept up. After losing heavily by the monopoly for many years, the islanders were now gaining by it and congratulating themselves on the foresight which had led them to cling to the monopoly system through bad report and good report. It had always been pointed out as one of the evils attending the monopoly system that if its abolition was delayed until it became unprofitable, the governing power could not then with a good grace abolish it. The abolition and the introduction of a new system would now be much more difficult than it would have been ten years before, and Mr. Winterbotham did not see his way towards effecting the proposed change of system approved by Government in October 1885.

132. In a subsequent letter in November 1888, he stated that he was extremely perplexed what to do or advise.

Abolition of Monopoly System at present unadvisable.

133. For the reasons stated above, although the monopoly system was radically bad and gave an immense amount of trouble, it would be injudicious to attempt any innovation during the present depression.

Unsettled Claims of Rajah fatal to Administration.

134. The difficulties attending the administration of the islands, and the introduction of any new system were indefinitely increased by the unsettled claims of Sultan Ali Rajah of Cannanore. If it was still supposed that the Malabar officials

were maturing a scheme which would enable the Cannanore family to resume the government of the islands, it must be said that they were as far from the goal as ever; Mr. Winterbotham did not believe that any possible system of revenue administration could be invented which the Rajah, however good his intentions, could carry on. He had not a single vessel of any sort. He was in pecuniary difficulties: pressed by creditors on every hand; the islanders were as determined as ever to have nothing to say to him. They would oppose every change which they thought was intended to facilitate his restoration to power. A band of adventurous spirits might be found willing to volunteer in his service for the conquest of the islands, and funds to charter a vessel for the purpose might possibly be raised; but the days for fillibustering expeditions were past, and there was no other way in which the Rajah could make his authority felt.

135. In styling himself lord of the isles he made a claim which was not acquiesced in by the islanders, and which he was powerless to enforce. To speak of the islands as if they were his in proprietary right was a grave solecism, arising from plain mistake of fact. His title was weakest where his claims to proprietorship were most extravagant. He claimed, for instance, to be the janmi of almost the whole of Minicoy, and if the claim was well founded it carried with it the right to sell or mortgage the land, and to evict from it. But what were the facts? The island was exclusively inhabited by a race not of Malabar extraction, to whom the language and tenures of Malabar were totally unknown. They bowed before *force majeure* as long as the Cannanore family were in a position to exercise it, and paid tribute in a form to which they had now become accustomed; but they certainly did not hold from the Rajah, nor had the Rajah any pretence for claiming the status of a Malabar janmi on the island.

Restoration of Rajah impossible.

136. In the present state of the Cannanore family all hope of their being able to regain authority on the islands was at an end, and the kindest course would be to tell the Rajah this and allot by way of compensation a proper malikana for his support. The Rajah was as opposed as ever to any negotiation of this sort, but in Mr. Winterbotham's opinion the fiat should go forth irrespective of his wishes. In recommending this he had no view to the Collector's ease and comfort, for the trouble and worry which the management of the islands entailed was quite out of proportion to their size or importance.

Grant of Malikana proposed.

137. If the Board and Government concurred with him in thinking that the time has come for explaining to the Rajah that his hope of re-establishing his ascendancy on the islands was an idle dream, and that he should be allotted a malikana in satisfaction of his claims, the amount of it would have to be determined; but until the views of the Board and Government were recorded, it was needless to discuss this question.

138. Government had now had the islands under their management for thirteen years, and the average net revenue during this period was between Rs. 11,000 and Rs. 12,000.

Prosperity of the Northern Islands.

139. In Androth, Kalpeni, Kavaratti and Agatti, the islanders were prospering and had no special grievance. The various matters dealt with by Mr. Dance were within the Collector's competence to dispose of. He would merely state his opinion that, with the knowledge now possessed, there would be no insuperable difficulty in introducing on the islands the same system of land-tax or combined land and tree-tax that prevailed in Malabar. The principles on which the new Malabar settlement was to be effected must shortly come up for discussion, and

when it was decided how and at what rates the cocoanut gardens on the coast were to be taxed, the same system could be introduced on the northern islands, with due allowance for the smaller privileges that the islanders enjoy.

PECULIAR CONDITION OF MINICOY.

140. It was only as regards Minicoy that immediate orders were called for. The circumstances of this island were unique. Minicoy stood alone, amid strong and variable currents baffling the skill of English Captains with all appliances for navigation. The people depended on seven more or less unserviceable vessels for their food-supply.

Not only was the food-supply at the best of times precarious and inadequate but being almost entirely in the hands of one man he could dictate his own terms of barter.

141. Mr. Winterbotham could think of no other present remedy than to encourage trade from the outside. An attempt in this direction had been made by the Amin in 1886, with the result described by Mr. Logan in a previous report. Mr. Logan found a Cutch merchant "duly installed in charge of a shop retailing to the islanders what they wanted in the shape of rice, salt and other petty articles of consumption." In the interests of the islanders at large this experiment might have seemed deserving of hearty support. The difficulty, however, was that the owner of the five large vessels, and the 200 sailors depending on him, were naturally averse to see their monopoly disappear; and it was their determination to keep the trade in their own hands that led to the recent disturbances on the island. Also if foreign vessels were permitted to trade with the island, a channel was opened for the smuggling away of the Government share of the fallen cocoanuts. Mr. Logan therefore caused the Cutch merchant to quit the island with his goods and chattels. However, after weighing all the *pros* and *cons* Mr. Winterbotham was definitely of opinion that the experiment of inviting vessels from the mainland to trade with the island should be sanctioned and encouraged.

142. On the island itself no improvement could take place till some of the men gave up their sea-faring life and took to the reclamation of the jungle, and if the growth of a trade carried by foreign vessels promoted this result it would be wholly beneficial. A large number of the islanders already regarded the breaking down of the rice monopoly as the one thing needful, and no other way in which it could be done could be suggested.

143. As matters at present stood there was simply no labor available to clear the jungle and tend the cocoanut palms. Till the jungle was cleared the plague of rats could not be subdued, and the produce of the island must continue to be the few nuts which the rats spared and which dropped to the ground. As a feeler, merely to see what they would say, Mr. Winterbotham had suggested to some of the northern islanders, and also to some of the Minicoy men who had come to Calicut, that labor should be imported by settling a colony of the northern islanders upon some of the Minicoy waste land. The reply was in both cases the same. The Minicoy jungle was full of devils, and if the jungle were cleared the devils would enter the inhabited parts and afflict the people. This provoking superstition, devoutly believed, added to the real obstacles in the way of jungle reclamation. The other obstacle besides want of male labor was the aversion of the people to the creation of private ownership where there were now communal rights. Under present circumstances every woman on the island was at least sure of the fixed percentage of all the nuts she could pick up. She could manufacture coir from the rat-eaten husks and gather firewood as she pleased. The people feared that if the land was given out on cowle, it would fall into the hands of a few families, and that all their communal privileges would disappear.

144. If the English officials could speak their language it would be easy to explain to them that sufficient land would be reserved for communal purposes; that if the trees were properly tended, as they were on the mainland and in the northern islands, the produce would increase ten or twenty fold; and that this increase would increase the demand for coir-twisters and give them better wages; but here they

were met by the next standing difficulty, which was the want of an intelligible language. Mr. Winterbotham was persuaded that half the unreasonableness of the Minicoy islanders and the disregard of orders arose from misunderstanding. The few words of broken Hindustani and Malayalam that a dozen or so of the islanders possessed formed a totally inadequate means of communication, and there was no check whatever upon the interpreters.

145. Mr. Logan had brought back the Amin's son with him and put him to school at Calicut, but the lad found the study of Malayalam an up-hill task. This was, however, the only possible way of overcoming the difficulty, and it was hoped that some of the chief men might be persuaded to follow the Amin's example and send their sons to Calicut to school. Unfortunately there were no spare funds for this or any other purpose.

146. As regarded Mr. Logan's scheme of substituting a light tree-tax in the inhabited part of the island in place of the objectionable poll-tax and certain other vexatious imposts, it would answer well if the people could be brought to agree to it. But they did not agree.

147. Mr. Twigg would, however, shortly visit the islands, and his principal duties at Minicoy would be to ascertain the views of the people on admitting traders from the coast and if he found the majority in favor of it, to let it be understood that Government would encourage the experiment; to try and win their consent to the tree-tax system; and to overcome their objection to cowles.

Orders deferred pending receipt of last Inspection Report.

G.O., No. 229, May 11, 1889.

148. Government resolved to defer passing orders until the report on the result of Mr. Twigg's visit was received.

Mr. Twigg's Report of 1889.

Mr. Twigg visited the islands, early this year, and his report is now before Government. It confirms Mr. Winterbotham in holding—

(1) That it is not expedient to attempt the abolition of the coir monopoly against the wish of the islanders during the present depressed state of the coir market.

(2) That no possible system of administration can be invented which will enable Government again to put the islands under the government of the Cannanore Rájah and that the pretence that the Collector is maturing such a system should be renounced.

(3) That Sultan Ali Rájah should be so informed and a fitting malikana allotted for his support.

Mr. Winterbotham's Comments.

149. Mr. Winterbotham cites as an instance of the manner in which the Rajah's claims have prevented reform that in 1878 he himself charged a rent at Kavaratti equivalent to a land tax of Rs. 23 per acre, exclusive of the monopoly tax on the coir produced. In Malabar the average acreage rate on cocoanut gardens is below Rs. 2. In fixing the rate of rent Mr. Winterbotham adhered to the rates customarily charged by the Rájah's agents, which he considered himself unauthorised to reduce, as it was then supposed that the islands would very shortly be restored to the Rájah's management. If the Rajah's claims were once settled, it would be recognised at once that Government were drawing from the islands a much larger revenue than their area and population warrant, and that they are much more heavily taxed than the people on the mainland although the islanders get hardly anything in return.

150. As regards Minicoy, the Amin has succeeded in clearing the breadth of the island of jungle for a length of about 1,400 yards and has planted the cleared space

with cocoanuts. Mr. Twigg believes this simple measure has greatly improved the health of the island. It has also given food and work for three months to a hundred people. Still the islanders consider this clearance as a grievance.

151. To the cowle system they are still resolute in their opposition. Time (failing other compulsion) must force a change and that soon, as the palms are going out of bearing, and among the customs of the remarkable people there is none which provides for replanting. Government should not replant, in Mr. Winterbotham's opinion, nor should coercion be exercised.

152. At Kavaratti an experiment in planting begun under the most auspicious circumstances with the full approval of the islanders has entirely failed, apparently from some slight change in the soil which prevents the palms from thriving and discourages planting. This is a discouraging precedent, but no other reform can be suggested. That matters should, for the present, remain as they are is the only advice Mr. Winterbotham can give.

153. As to the question of food-supply, Mr. Twigg reports that the islanders will welcome foreign traders, and the Collector will try and induce some Malabar ship-owner to try the venture.

154. A sea-worthy steamer is urgently needed; very little can be done in the way of reform unless the visits to the islands are more frequent and less hurried. A steamer runs monthly from Colombo to Minicoy to visit the light-house, but the authorities will not make this available for revenue purposes. Mr. Winterbotham throws out as a suggestion the possibility of managing the light-house service from Calicut instead of Colombo.

The Revenue Board at one with Mr. Winterbotham.

155. The Board of Revenue agree with the Collector on the subject of the coir monopoly and as to the settlement of the northern islands.

They consider that persistent efforts should be made to get the villagers to clear the jungles.

156. The annexation—if it is such—of the islands is beyond the Board's province, but it will be a matter for regret if the islands are ever given back to the Rajah. They have desired the Collector to report further in regard to the maintenance of a sufficient food-supply on the islands.

August 10th 1889. J. F. P.